

CCXXII

Richard Haven to Lady Starr

MY DEAR HELEN,—Your news is amusing and welcome. I am continually hearing of parents who are quite certain that their children's hearts are free and who are invariably wrong. Were I a father I am sure I should never be so blundering. But it is good news. Let all young people marry, say I, for even if they make a mistake they will have had a little pure happiness *en route* to the awakening; and, since man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, that is a great thing.

Toby, however, is of the simpler kind and should be happy much longer, if not for ever. Of Portia I know nothing, but guess her to be all right: that is to say, his sort.

Please the Sisters who spin the web of our destiny, and do it often so ill, that he comes through this barbarous business to hold her in his arms and some day be surrounded by little twinkling Starrs of greater and lesser magnitude! There cannot be too many children. And if you can lure his enchantress to London I will give you both a pre-war lunch, and I am sure I am entitled to one such orgy, having smoked no cigars nor drunk any wine for months. Across the table shall I get to know her.